Nuggets Of News

August, 2001

News, Photographs and Events of the Gold Hill Historical Society, Est. 1986
Meetings are held the third Wednesday each month at 6:30 PM at the Museum, 504 First Avenue, Gold Hill, Oregon
(except August when the annual potluck is held at noon on the Museum grounds on the Sunday following the third Wednesday)
Mailing address: Post Office Box 26, Gold Hill, Oregon 97525-0026 Telephone: (541) 855-1182
Museum Hours: Memorial Day through Labor Day (Summer) -- Noon to 4:00 PM, Wednesday through Sunday, except holidays
Labor Day through Memorial Day (Winter) -- Noon to 4:00 PM, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, except holidays
Admission FREE, donations accepted

Y'ALL COME

It's time for our annual August potluck/meeting, this year on Sunday, August 19th from noon till ?? Ted Wharton will be doing his famous barbecued chicken; we'll supply the corn on the cob and beverages. All you need to bring is a potluck dish of your choice, your table service and your appetite. You need not be a member to attend so don't let visiting family or friends keep you away. Just bring them along.

After everyone is stuffed and we've held our brief meeting, we'll play our version of "White Elephant Bingo". Just bring a wrapped white elephant gift for each Bingo card you wish to play. Once play begins, cards are not cleared until the game ends, however, horizontal, vertical and diagonal "Bingos" are acknowledged and gifts chosen by each winner as they occur. As each wrapped gift is chosen, it is unwrapped, has a sticker dot placed on it and then placed in front of the winner. As play progresses, each winner may either choose a wrapped gift (as long as they last) or an "already won" gift that has less than three stickers on it. Each "win" places a sticker on a gift and it is only permanently yours when the third sticker is placed on it. Lots of strategy here – sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't but it's always great fun.

100 YEARS OF FASHION

On May 10th Gold Hill Historical Society presented *100 Years of Fashion* slide show in conjunction with Oregon Historical Society. We are so fortunate the Grange allowed us once again to use their hall, and even served refreshments after the program. Gloria Wood did her usual excellent narration and all in attendance seemed to enjoy the information.

JACKSON COUNTY HISTORY MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

Also on May 10th, your Board of Directors plus Gloria Wood attended the JCHMA meeting in Trail (Upper Rogue Historical Society). These meetings are a great way to keep in touch with other museums in our area, and exchange information and ideas with them. There are now fifteen organizations which make up the membership; Applegate Valley Historical society, Bib Butte Historical Society, Buncom Historical Society, Camp White Historical Association, Eagle Point Historical Society, Gold Hill Historical Society, Lake Creek Historical Society, McKee Bridge

Historical Society, Phoenix Historical Society, Rogue Valley Genealogical Society, Southern Oregon Chapter National Railway Historical Society, Southern Oregon Historical Society, Talent Historical Society, Upper Rogue Historical Society, and Woodville Museum. Quite a diverse group but all of us are interested in preserving the history of our area in our own unique way.

JCHMA met again on June 14th, this time at Southern Oregon Chapter National Railway Society. After an update on all the news we were treated to a tour of some of the old cars and were able to see the great job they are doing fixing up their park and renovating the old cars and engines. One of the benefits of the larger association speaking for us is that we will now be able to receive our budget money on a quarterly basis, instead of only once a year, after half of the fiscal year is over. This will make it much easier for our Treasurer and all the other, too.

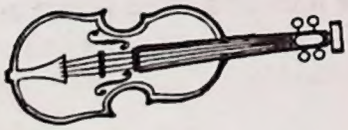
Our next meeting will be August 9th at Woodville Museum in Rogue River at which time there will probably be more budget discussions as well as other problem solving as the problems occur.

RENOVATION

During May we saw the completion of our "boardwalk", a bridge over the roots of the old maple tree in our front yard. This now completes sidewalks all the way around the museum, making it possible for visitors to look at outside displays all seasons. We also completed getting the old garage braced to stand another 100 years and had a new roof put on it. We're keeping the antique unpainted look but will preserve the wood with a preservative. Still to come are some repairs to the foundation which should occur this fall.

GOLD DUST DAY

We participated in the parade and received a ribbon for our float, which consisted of Ted Wharton's beautifully restored Jeep pickup towing the John Deere stamp mill engine. Ted drove and Armella Wharton, Marge Martin, Clare Moore and Lyn Parker rode in the pickup, dressed up in their pioneer dresses. We placed a sign in the park inviting everyone to visit our museum and did have some visitors. Many thanks to Barbara Finnie for the beautiful pictures she took and printed for us.



SCHOOL PROGRAMS

On June 7th Susan Lakefish's 4th grade class of 30 students was introduced to life in the early days of Gold Hill. They churned butter, washed clothes on a scrub board, viewed slides of early Gold Hill and checked out a mining display that was set up in the yard. They brought beans and franks, which were served with cornbread muffins topped with freshly churned butter, lemonade and cookies. After lunch the students performed the dances they learned for their school Oregon Trail program. Many thanks to Gloria Wood who coordinated all of this with Mrs. Lakefish, and to Marge Martin, Clare Moore and Barbara Finnie who came in to help. On the last day of school we received some great "thank yous" from the class.

On June 8th Gloria Wood took the Gold Hill Slides to Patrick School and showed them to Scott Joseph's 4th grade class. After the presentation his class of 30 toured the museum, after which they were served punch and cookies. Marge Martin and Clare Moore once again came to the rescue and helped.

MUSEUM HOURS

We began our summer schedule on May 30th and are now open Wednesday thru Sunday, noon to 4:00 p.m. Following Labor Day, September 3rd, we will return to our winter schedule, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, noon to 4:00 p.m.

NEW EQUIPMENT

We continue to slowly acquire and learn new technology to help us catalog our history and artifacts, and to document current occurrences. We have purchased a digital camera to help us with this endeavor. Many thanks to our computer experts, Cliff and Barbara Finnie for their input into our purchase decision, and thanks in advance for their chore of teaching us how to use this magnificent tool. We'll be taking pictures with the new camera at the potluck on August 19th and learn how to transfer, label, store and print on the computer following that.

NEW GIFT SHOP ITEM

We recently stocked a new CD, "*Dance Music of the Oregon Trail*" with the fiddle, banjo, guitar, mandolin and accordion playing seventeen of the traditional tunes in old time style. These CD's sell for $15.00 and you can listen to ours in the museum before you buy.

OREGON, MY OREGON

On Thursday, July 26th, *Oregon, My Oregon*, a history based program sponsored by Southern Oregon Historical Society explored the early history and symbols, which make our state unique. The program was presented at the Gold Hill Library. Participants were invited to come down to the Museum at the conclusion of the program for a hands-on activity related to the western meadowlark, our state bird. The children made simple bird feeders on tables in the yard and enjoyed cookies and lemonade. Marge Martin and Lyn Parker assisted our Coordinator Gloria Wood, and Clare Moore helped with the clean up. We hosted 27 children and 8 adults for this program.

BACK–TO-SCHOOL SHOPPING

By Gloria Wood

September will soon be upon us and time for the back-to-school shopping craze that occurs at this season of the year when it is necessary to replace shoes and clothes outgrown during the dry, hot summer months.

Long ago residents of the area might have chosen to shop at J. W. Merritt and Company, relocated to the first floor of the I.O.O.F. after its completion in 1898, from its original building on 4th Avenue. They carried all kinds of general merchandise, in fact, everything except hardware.

J. W. MERRITT & CO.

GENERAL MERCHANTS

A F C GINGHAMS

Latest Novelties in Wash Goods

Ladies' Shirt Waists from 50c to $1.50

GROCERIES

LADIES and GENTS SHOES

A. A. Cutler Shoe

Mohair Sateens in white and colors. All shades of India Silk. The latest in Ladies and Gents Summer Hats and Caps. Miners supplies, Picks and Steel, Shovels, Stone Coal, Palace Hams, Bacon and Lard—Finest in the land

Boys straw hats - - $ .15

Gents $2 Felt hats cut to 1.50

" $1.50 " " 1.00

Mason fruit jars, 1-2 gal. 1.15

" " qts. .90

" " pts. .75

Economy jars, 1-2 gal. 1.35

" " qts. 1.15

Gold Hill News - 1906

Under Mr. Merritt's supervision, the store prospered. He even ventured into blacksmithing in Gold Hill with the purchase of J. W. Hays' shop in1907. His career had begun very differently. He would have been well acquainted with the apparel needs of school age youth.

John W. Merritt arrived in Jacksonville in 1875, after graduating from State Normal School at Oswego, New York. He had accepted the position as principal-teacher, which he retained until his retirement from the field of education in 1884. Under his directorship, District Number One became the top ranking school in the state of Oregon.

In 1883, while still teaching, Mr. Merritt decided to venture into retail merchandising, an area that appealed to him. Entering into a partnership with his friend, Dr. J. W. Robinson, they purchased the City Drug Store. They added cosmetic preparations and gift items to their stock of prescription drugs and patent medicine.

John W. Merritt

This was also a time of personal tragedy. In 1877, Mr. Merritt had married Jacksonville-born Mary Belle "Molly" McCully. Their first child, a son they named James Mason, was born in October of 1882. A second son, George H. was born in July of 1893. One month later, James Mason died of "cholera infantum". Mollie never fully recovered from the birth of her second child and the loss of her first. She died in January of 1884, from "Congestive chill" at the age of 26. Son George would be raised by Aunt Issie McCully.

John realized his continuing interest in retail merchandising with the opening of Merritt's Cash Store in Jacksonville soon after his resignation from the school district. He sold his half interest in the prospering drug store to his partner so that he could devote all his time and energy to the Cash Store.

Although successful, Mr. Merritt realized a location near the railroad would offer more lucrative returns, so in 1887 he moved his store to Central Point. "The idea of a store where customers would be offered discounts for paying cash was certainly not original with John Merritt, but it was

surely a novelty in southern Oregon. For years merchants had offered credit because they felt they must wait for the farmer to sell his annual cash crop and the miner to make a strike. The newspapers were full of announcements of store owners trying to collect long overdue accounts through the courts. A cash store not only appealed to the thrifty shoppers, it also was sound business practice..." (*The Table Rock Sentinel,* May, 1983)

By 1890, he opened a second store in Gold Hill, which he placed under the management of Robert Moore. During this time, he became acquainted with Mr. Moore's sister, Jennie, who had gone to school in Jacksonville. Despite the twenty-year age difference, they were married in 1891. Two years later a daughter, Esther, was born. Frequent trips were made to Gold Hill.

JENNIE ELIZABETH MOORE

In 1916 John Merritt closed his store in Central Point. He and Jennie moved to gold Hill where he devoted his time to the remaining store. Five years later he died at the age of 75. Jennie lived on until 1934.

John W. Merritt was greatly missed. His accomplishments were many: educator, financier, orator, merchant, agriculturist, politician and respected citizen.

(The Table Rock Sentinel, April & May, 1983)

THE COMPETITION

By Gloria Wood

William "Willie" T. Reames was 21 years old when he and younger brother, Clarence, formed a partnership to take over the Gold Hill Mercantile. They would own and manage it together. The brothers were young, but no strangers to commerce.

The boys' father, Thomas G. Reames, was thirteen when his family crossed the plains to Oregon in 1852. The family settled on a farm in the Eden area (Phoenix). Mr. Reames moved to Jacksonville in 1864, where he served as a deputy sheriff. He was elected sheriff of Jackson County in 1868. After his term expired, he bought the Union Stables and established a livery business. After giving up this venture, he went into partnership with Ben Sach and opened "Reames and Sach", a general merchandise store that remained in operation for four years. Thomas then joined his brother, Evan, in the purchase of the stock of White and Martin in Jacksonville and opened a general merchandise store. Before long they opened a branch in Linkville (Klamath Falls) and a "Settler's Store" at the army post at Fort Klamath. In 1897, Mr. Reames went into partnership with C. C. Beekman in Jacksonville in the "Beekman and Reames Banking House".

In 1889, the store in Gold Hill opened with Alice Mathews, former Foots Creek resident and school teacher, serving as clerk. Business was profitable until after the turn of the century when large scale mining activity declined in the area. The store closed in 1903.

WILLIE REAMES

CLARENCE REAMES

Willie moved to Berkeley, California, where he opened a mercantile business. Clarence studied law at the University of Oregon and was admitted to the bar in 1901. He and his older brother, Evan, practiced law together before both intered into partnership with Judge Colvig in Medford. Clarence's first wife, Clara Louise Colvig, daughter of Judge Colvig and Adelaide Birdseye Colvig, died of an accidental death at the age of 40.

(The Table Rock Sentinel, September, 1984)

THE LUCKY BART MINE

BY Ted Wharton

"GOLD" the magic word! "PROSPECTOR" & "MINER" those who seek the gold.

Many stories, fact and fiction, have resulted from the documented discovery of gold in Southern Oregon in 1857. Word soon spread and by 1860 with the discovery of the fabulous rich Gold Hill pocket, prospectors and miners swarmed along streams, gullies and ridges, lured by the sometimes rich finds. Stories, true and false, were like results on a gambler's table. Articles from the Gold Hill News read as follows: "Jacksonville miners glean $1,000.00 in two hours", "Weekly cleanups netting more than 1,100 ounces of gold", "Sterling Creek miners locate rich ancient channel", "pieces of float gold found worth hundreds of dollars" and so the stories and rumor spread. Claims were posted and mines named. Promising leads brought expensive machinery such as arrastras, stamp mills, crushers and sluicing machines, later replaced by dredges into the area. Out of all the chaos of riches and broken dreams where many mines were bought and sold or stolen, and many leads and veins fizzled out, one mine stood out with all the indications of permanency. That mine was the "LUCKY BART". In 1890 after the quartz and hard rock mining boom had slowed down, a prospector named Joseph Cox located a rich vein just north of Sardine Creek in Section 29. The vein crossed the creek and dipped to the southeast. Lacking financing and enthusiasm, Cox sold the claim to Bart Signoretti, thence the name, Lucky Bart. The claim did not satisfy Bart's desire to get rich quick so he in turn sold to one William Lampert, who in 1891 leased out the mine, first to John Mead, then Josiah (Joe) Beeman of Gold Hill. Being more persistent than the previous owners, Beeman soon located five rich veins of ore. The arrastras in use were losing much gold so Beeman persuaded a San Francisco bank to finance purchase of a steam engine driven 5 stamp mill. The heavy mill was transported by ship, rail, then by mules pulling wagons and sleds to the claim on Sardine Creek, five miles from the railroad. The mine was located in Sections 29 & 30, T. 35 S, R.3W. Total claims covered initially 230 acres. The mill was set up on concrete footings with 12X12 timbers in 1892 and commenced immediately crushing the rich ore from the five veins. In 1897 Beeman bought out Lampert, then added Hattie Beeman, his wife and daughter of blacksmith Bill Hay, to the deed. (History and specifications of the stamp mill will be covered in a separate and subsequent article). We will just comment, the mill ran intermittently from 1892 till 1975. Existing records show average ore milled at $100.00 per ton with in excess of 14,000 tons going through the mill prior to 1936. To attest to the profitable nature of the operation, the Beemans in 1901 built the fine house in Gold Hill, which is now the home of the Gold Hill Historical Society, and Museum. In ensuing years Hattie leased the mill and mine to James T. Breeding who was living in the Kirkpatrick cabin at the Lost Cabin Mine. Breeding gave up operations for lack of ability to find new veins. The old veins had played out, so he thought. He also wanted to pursue the search for the Lost Cabin Mine vein. Hattie, by now Josiah's widow, then sold to J. E. Kirk, who in turn sold to John E. Cole. In 1963 Cole sold to A. L. Harrison who then operated the mine on and off for 20 years. Records at the time in 1965 show a total of 11 tunnels (adits) existed. One entrance tunnel ran 75 feet to the main vein, then 100 feet of drifting, ending with a 30 foot shaft . From these deepest workings of the mine, ore was producing $1130.00 per ton.

Harrison died in 1985 at which time his step grandson, Don Gammelgaard took over operations. He did only token mining, mostly placer work at the mill site, hoping to glean any gold spilled over the years. He then let the claim lapse. In 1994 the claim was taken up by Jim Dodson of Medford who inventoried the claims, opened some tunnels and did some tunneling until his death in 2000. Gammelgaard also died the same year. It is unknown and doubtful if a claim has been re-filed. A flood in 1997 wiped out the lower tunnel, roads and the mill site. At one point in time, Keldon Adams of Sardine Creek obtained a portion of the claim, which he still holds. Meanwhile the stamp mill was determined to be not economically repairable. In 1995 arrangements were made by Dodson and the Bureau of Land Management to deed the stamp mill to Gold Hill Historical Society. The Society, with much volunteer help, dismantled the mill and trucked it to the museum grounds in Gold Hill. The mill has now been restored with good timbers and set up on the museum's mining display area.

So goes the saga of the Lucky Bart Mine, a success story among the many such mines of its

time. Untold riches are still locked in the mountain but are beyond reach of the present day miner. Due to efforts of the ecologists and environmentalists, digging for the treasure is beyond reach. The few still living old time miners such as Kelly Adams, and yes, the author, still dream of the riches that were uncovered in the vein of gold filled quartz 24" thick, that became a "blanket vein" and consistently produced 4 to 8 ounces of gold per ton with a like amount of silver. The one hundred eleven years the claim existed attests to its riches.

Information from: Oregon Metal Mines Handbook
Wallings History of Oregon
Gold Hill News back issues
Gold Hill Historical Society
Interviews with many old miners

SCHOOL DAZE

By Gloria Wood

As September nears, children who had so eagerly looked forward to summer adventures with anticipation, now face the challenge of a school year of new classes and teachers. Meanwhile, teachers will attend meetings, stock classroom shelves with supplies, and plan lessons. It would be interesting to know how Margaret Patrick and Cora Wait prepared for the impending invasion.

MARGARET ELLEN GRIFFITHS PATRICK was born in Stockton, California in 1865. She moved with her parents, John and Martha Griffiths, and brother, Johnny, to Sardine Creek in 1882. She devoted fifty years to education in the Rogue Valley teaching her first class in a one-room schoolhouse at Rock Point when she was seventeen.

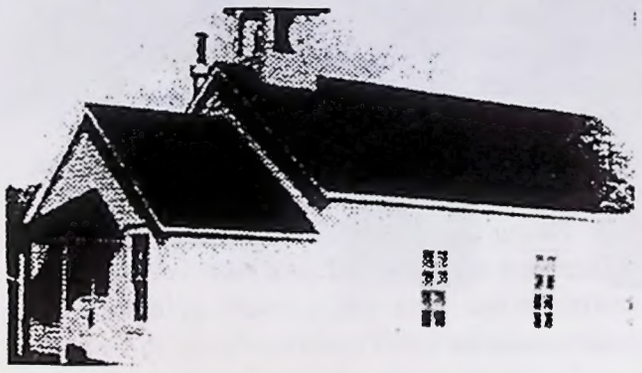
The railroad company announced a contest to name the new townsite where the station would be located. Johnny Griffiths submitted the winning name of Gold Hill and was awarded the half-acre building plot bordering the river on which he built a house for his widowed mother and family.

MARGARET GRIFFITHS PATRICK

Margaret taught a subscription school in Gold Hill until the first public school was built in 1888, where she also taught. In 1904, she married orchardist, George Patrick, and they resided on his farm in Gold Hill. After her husband's death, she again taught school. Patrick Elementary School in Gold Hill is named in her honor and stands on land once owned by the Patricks.

CORA NEWTON WAIT was born in Gold Hill in 1887 to pioneer settlers, Eva and William H. Newton, whose family had a homestead on Sardine Creek. Mr. Newton worked with the survey crew for the railroad.

Cora attended school in Rock Point until the 10th grade when she came to school in Gold Hill and received her training to become a teacher. After completing that year she went to Jacksonville where she took her written tests at the old court house. She received her teacher's certificate, and began her teaching career at the age of 18 at Trail Creek. She returned to the area to teach at one of southern Oregon's earliest schools, the Dardanelle, a one-room school in the historic settlement area across the river from Gold Hill. She taught pupils in first through eighth grade for the salary of $30 or $35 per month. The area was a farming community in those days and her pupils walked several miles to school and home each day. Mrs. Wait drove a single-horse and buggy from the family home on Sardine Creek to her classes.



DARDANELLE SCHOOL

Mrs. Wait left teaching in 1916 and moved to Portland where she met and married Perry Wait in 1921. She returned to Sardine Creek shortly thereafter.

(Mary Kell, *Medford Mail Tribune*, November 29, 1962)

HASTE MAKES WASTE

And this little bit of "haste makes waste" comes to us from the April 24, 195 edition of the *Gold Hill News* about an eager Gold Hill High School student.

"The feminine trick of holding pins in the mouth brought trouble, which threatened to be most serious, to Miss Ella Jamiseson, a high school student of this city. Last Thursday morning the young lady was hurried in her preparations to foil the "tardy" mark. Shortly after classes were called she experienced pain in her throat, persisting and growing rapidly worse, and concluded that she must have inadvertently swallowed a pin. So acute became the pain that she was taken to Medford, where investigation proved her guess to be correct. The troublesome little steel stiletto was lodged in the windpipe. In attempting to recover it, the pin slipped from the forceps and continued its journey. At present Miss Jamiseson is suffering no inconvenience from the presence of the pin in her stomach, where physicians say it is not likely to cause serious results."

RAFFLE

Don't miss your chance! We are raffling off a beautiful hand latch-hooked rug which was made by member, Winona Nichols, and donated for our raffle. This is a 3' by 5', floral design with beautiful colors. The drawing will take place during our meeting Wednesday, December 19th. Tickets are $1.00 each or 6 for $5.00.

CHAVNER/ESTREMADO OPEN HOUSE

The Chavner/Estremado open house for 2001 will be on Monday, October 1st from 9:00 a.m. till 1:00 p.m. If you haven't yet seen this beautiful old house since it's renovation, be sure to see it this year. This is the "catalog house" built by Thomas Chavner's children after his death. Becky Estremado has done an impressive job of decorating and furnishing and it's definitely a "DON'T MISS" tour.

GOLD HILL HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL/VOLUNTEER FORM

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

☐ *Family Membership $6.00 per year*
New or Renewal

☐ *Contribution*

☐ *Yes, I would like to volunteer*
- ☐ *A few hours*
- ☐ *A day now and then*
- ☐ *A regular day*
  - ☐ *Monthly*
  - ☐ *Weekly*

Would you have time to:
--help at special events/programs
--be a greeter at the museum
--help inventory artifacts
--enter data in our computer
--help plant the Memorial Garden
*--other*_____

Return form to:
Gold Hill Historical Society
504 First Avenue
Post Office Box 26
Gold Hill, Oregon 97525

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lyn Parker, President

Marge Martin, Vice-President

Janet Sessions, Secretary

Clare Moore, Treasurer

Ted Wharton

Rex Parker

OUR PURPOSE AND GOALS

The Gold Hill Historical Society's purpose and Goals are to collect, document and preserve the history of the Gold Hill area through:

Oral Histories
Photographs
Artifacts
Books

Gold Hill Historical Society
504 First Avenue
Post Office Box 26
Gold Hill, Oregon 97525-0026

Eagle Point Historical Soc. & Museum
301 N. Royal Ave.
PO Box 201
Eagle Point, Oregon 97524

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